

Site Specific Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 21, 1999

The January 21, 1999, Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) meeting took place at the Information Age Park Resource Center in Paducah at 5:30 p.m.

The following board members were present: Nola Courtney, Mark Donham, Angela Farmer, Judy Ingram, Vicki Jones, Linda Long, Ray McLennan, Craig Rhodes, Jim Smart, and Bill Tanner. The facilitator present was Steve Kay. The *ex officio* members present were Carl Froede, Jr., Jimmie Hodges, Tuss Taylor, and John Volpe. Also present were the following members of the public and employees, contractors, and subcontractors of the United States Department of Energy (DOE): Rich Bonczek, Jeannie Brandstetter, Bryan Clayton, Dave Dollins, Dennis Hill, Norm Jetta, Fraser Johnstone, Dave Massey, Jimmy Massey, John Maybriar, Todd Mullins, Shirley Speer, and Abdi Yazdani.

Agenda

Steve Kay called the meeting to order and asked if there were any modifications to the agenda. Kay proposed adding an item under the administrative issues concerning the May meeting. The agenda was approved as a working document.

Minutes

The November 19, 1998, meeting minutes were approved by the board. Mark Donham noted that he had not received the categorical exclusion (CX) that was stated as an action item in the minutes and Jimmie Hodges said he had the CX with him to give to Donham.

Information Handouts

Donham gave the board members letters from a response he received to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The request was for information on SSAB contract expenses. He said although the total amount of the contract was specified, specific amounts for certain services were blacked out under Exemption 6 of the FOIA, which claims confidential business information. Donham said he thought this would be of interest to the board and said he planned to appeal this to Washington.

Jeannie Brandstetter said the project updates are a little different from before because of the waste area groups (WAGs) changing to operable units. She said she also included a section of newspaper articles and advertisements that have appeared in the newspaper since the last meeting.

Donham asked John Volpe about the technical reports on the vegetable study for the five-year Agreement in Principle (AIP) plan. Volpe said the report was published under the Federal Facilities Oversight Unit and that the Kentucky Radiation Control Branch provided information for the report. Volpe said he would see if he could find the report for Donham. Tuss Taylor said the annual report for the AIP will be issued in two to three weeks. He said the annual report is broken out in separate sections. Donham said he had requested the technical report several times and would like to see the vegetable study. Volpe said the Radiation Control Branch has the data included in the study, but not the technical report. Taylor said he would provide a copy of the annual report to the SSAB members once it is released.

Kay gave the members a letter from SeaChange, Inc., an organization that conducts environmental analyses. This letter was sent to Kay for the members of the SSAB for technical support consideration. He said the organization claims to be independent, and Kay said had not heard of it before.

Environmental Management and Enrichment Facilities Project Updates

Members received a handout on the Environmental Management and Enrichment Facilities (EM&EF) updates. There were no comments on the updates.

Vortec Update

Hodges said the schedule for completion for the Environmental Assessment (EA) has been updated. He said the public comment period is scheduled for May 1999. Hodges said the reason for this is to give the public another opportunity for input, since the scope of the EA has been revised. The anticipated issue date for the EA is early July 1999. Donham asked if Hodges was aware of the test in Fernald. Hodges said he was not aware. Donham asked if Fernald used the same Fluor-Daniel vitrification machine that had the fire. Norm Jetta, Vortec Corporation, said the units are tested at the pilot plant in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and that Vortec ran surrogates of the Fernald waste that met Fernald specifications. Donham asked if the plant was moved from Morgantown. Jetta said the plant was never in Morgantown and that it always had been in Pittsburgh. Donham asked if there would be a DOE report on the test. Hodges said there would

be some type of report developed on the test and he would contact the deputy site manager at Fernald and get Donham a copy of the report.

Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Update

Dennis Hill said Ched Bradley, DOE Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride (UF₆) Management Program, had to cancel the public information session he had scheduled for January 20, 1999. He said the program will bring the latest information about the conversion facilities in Paducah and Portsmouth to the board once it is finalized. Hill suggested for this update to remain on the agenda for February.

Waste Area Group 6

Bryan Clayton said the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) comments have been received on the D1 version of the WAG 6 Remedial Investigation (RI) Report. He said the state comments on this draft have not been received yet. Clayton said report development has been completed for two treatability studies and the internal drafts will be submitted to the state and EPA in mid-February.

Waste Area Group 22, Solid Waste Management Unit 2

Nola Courtney referred to the EM&EF project update on Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU) 2 and said there was not much additional information this month on the project. Courtney said she recently received a copy of the comments from the Radiation Control Branch and requested to be on the distribution list for the comments rather than having to contact someone for them. Carl Froede asked if there was a list of projects for which each SSAB member was responsible and said he would be glad to provide comments and information to the members directly. Hodges said he would make sure board members involved in specific areas receive information in a timely manner. Donham suggested to Froede that if he sends the comments out by e-mail, to send them to all the SSAB members who have e-mail addresses. Kay suggested that individual members let Froede know whether or not they want the information on all the projects. Donham said federal agencies are supposed to post comments on their web sites.

Froede said the EPA has suspended its review of the SWMU 2 Proposed Plan pending the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant DOE submitting a Land Use Assurance Control Plan (LUCAP). He said if the EPA approves the no-action alternative, the EPA would want to see some sort of long-term institutional control plan. He said the DOE is in the process of working on this plan. Donham said he was curious about the LUCAP and asked if the plan was in progress right now. Froede said as DOE defense facilities are closing, they are being turned over to private enterprises. He said the EPA is signing decision documents on landfills, removal actions, etc. He said EPA Region 4 is going to force the facilities to come up with their own strategies for maintaining institutional control on sites where waste is left. Froede said the LUCAP will designate the condition of the land for these sites. He said the public would be able to determine, within the Administrative Record, what sites have been closed with waste in place through the LUCAP and see what is required within the plan. Donham asked where public participation falls

in this process. Froede said that would be at the proposed plan stage. He said the land-use control plan is a strategic document and the site decisions will be made at each individual record of decision (ROD).

Donham asked where the cumulative effects analysis and the study of alternatives fell in this process. Froede said in the feasibility study within the risk assessment section. He said the closeout document will look at the overall site impact. Donham said he did not think that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was being considered. He said the Accelerating Cleanup Plan stated that the land-use plan would be done in compliance with NEPA for the Hanford site and he did not see how it could be excluded at other sites.

Kay said the issue of cumulative effects has been an ongoing issue and asked the board if a proposal for a recommendation was desired. Donham said that the cumulative effects issue already has been a recommendation made under the Vortec issue. Kay asked if the issue of cumulative effects should be given a category on the agenda. Angela Farmer asked about the liability for different landfills for different sites. Froede said the landfills are DOE's liability. Ray McLennan asked if the SSAB also had made a recommendation on studying the cumulative effects of the Accelerating Cleanup Plan and wondered what the SSAB could do if the recommendation were not accepted. Froede said the state and the EPA are involved in cleaning up closed waste units and said a lot of Donham's issues concern ongoing operations and off-site impacts. He said that Carol Connell from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Control (ATSDR) is preparing a final report on off-site impacts and recommended that the SSAB check into this report.

Hodges said one of the problems the DOE is dealing with is how the current cleanup operations relate to ongoing issues. Hodges said these issues are not closed regardless of DOE's response to SSAB recommendations and expects the DOE to revisit these issues from time to time. Ronald Lamb said the issue keeps coming up on the agenda and said the SSAB should be able to better advise the DOE in this regard. Kay asked if there was a proposal by the board to place the cumulative effects issue on the agenda. The board agreed to add the issue on the agenda as an open discussion.

Waste Area Groups 9 and 11

The board received a fact sheet on WAGs 9 and 11 and was given a chance to comment. No comments were made.

Northeast and Northwest Plumes Pump and Treat Facilities

Bill Tanner said he distributed a list of hydrogeologists to the board in October for technical support consideration. Tanner asked Donham about the list of individuals he had prepared. Donham said he had a list of about 18 individuals and was not opposed to the idea of having this support. Tanner proposed considering Jeff Douthitt because he previously has worked with Bechtel Jacobs and is familiar with the subject. Tanner also proposed to obtain the services of someone who is independent and might offer a different opinion. Donham said he has

corresponded with Warren Levy in Florida and said he has a lot of credentials and suggested considering him. Tanner asked if he could have Levy's e-mail address and said he would include him in the individuals he contacted. Tanner said he would work with Shelley Hawkins on getting the proposals to the appropriate individuals and updating the board in the monthly mailing. Froede advised the board to make sure the technical support it chooses meets the state's requirements.

Paducah-Area Community Reuse Organization

Hodges said the Paducah-Area Community Reuse Organization is putting together a grant proposal to the DOE to implement an area economic development and workforce retraining plan. He said the plan involves regional economic development, facility reuse, entrepreneurial development, and workforce retraining.

Risk Assessment Discussion

Rich Bonczek, University of Tennessee, made a presentation on risk assessment. Bonczek and his associates drafted the WAG 6 RI Report Risk Assessment. Bonczek said he would give a general overview of risk assessment and relate it to WAG 6. He said all risk assessments are done following EPA guidance, or EPA paradigms. First, a data evaluation is performed. After this evaluation, an exposure assessment and a toxicity assessment are performed. These assessments are integrated to form a risk characterization. This characterization leads into a decision-making process, which involves the public. Bonczek said risk assessment is just one part of the decision-making process. The EPA comes up with two numbers: reference doses and slope factors. He said with reference doses, an effect such as sickness will occur over a short period of time. The slope factor is an actual probability of contracting cancer.

Bonczek said a recreational scenario is done if the site has certain recreation of physical barriers. He said the recreational scenario for WAG 6 was limited to consumption of biota because it was a flat area. A residential scenario also is done. This allows the risk assessor to give the highest possible rates of contact with the contaminated media. Industrial exposure is another scenario conducted. Bonczek said a ROD would control access to the subsurface soil.

Craig Rhodes asked Bonczek to explain the difference between risk assessment and risk management. Bonczek said risk assessment is calculating numbers and presenting the information or uncertainties and assessing the severity of the situation. Risk management deals with the protection of individuals who might be exposed. He said actual cleanup or institutional controls can be implemented under risk management.

Donham said it seems difficult to make judgment calls on the areas of heavy exposure if there is no knowledge about what the current exposure level is to certain things. He said the synergistic effect of being exposed to different toxins at the same time is not calculated into the risk assessment formula. Bonczek said Donham was correct that there were uncertainties. He said the ATSDR is mandated to conduct human health risk assessments to help with this area. Donham said unless it gets to the health study phase, determinations about body burdens are not made. Bonczek said that body burden and synergistic effects are very important; unfortunately, the EPA

has not been able to assess all previous possible exposures to chemicals. However, risk assessment targets the most highly contaminated places to determine the worst possible effects. Bonczek offered the SSAB further discussions or workshops on risk assessment if needed.

DOE Response to SSAB Recommendations

Hodges said there was nothing pending in this area.

Site Specific Advisory Board Workplan

The SSAB Workplan was updated. Courtney said WAG 22 did not need to go on the February agenda because there would be nothing to report. An update on the search for technical support for the Northeast and Northwest Plumes Pump and Treat Facilities was added to the February agenda. Brandstetter recommended adding a discussion on the Groundwater Operable Unit Feasibility Study to the February agenda, since the document would be issued during that time.

Transportation of Wastes/Hazardous Materials

Jimmy Massey presented an update on the Hanford shipment. He said the issue involved 40 containers of waste that was shipped to Hanford for disposal. Massey said that the treated waste in the containers was left from the September 1997 ruptured drum incident in the C-746-Q Building. Massey said some of the containers were questioned at Hanford and 28 were sent back to Perma-Fix for testing. He said one of the containers questioned was tested and there was no free liquid present. Massey said the results of the testing should come back in February, but nothing unusual has been found yet.

Financial Update

The SSAB received a spreadsheet containing actual costs through December 1998. Hill said the spreadsheet was a little different this time because some of the items were combined. Rhodes asked about the specific expenditures on Donham's FOIA request. Hill said when the request was made, it was handed over to the Jacobs Environmental Management Team and the decision to black out certain figures was made by Jacobs based on what was propriety or business-sensitive information. Hill said he would try to provide any additional information needed on the spreadsheet. Donham said it seems unusual that the SSAB was not able to know on an item-per-item basis what certain services cost. Hill said some of the information requested by Donham was under the DOE prime contractor period with Jacobs, but said he would provide as much information on expenses as he could on the spreadsheet. Hill said the two primary expenses for the SSAB include Hawkins' time and Kay's time. Donham said the board should be able to find out how much it pays for specific expenses and said he plans to appeal the FOIA request.

Site Specific Advisory Board Web Page

Hill said new information on web page services had been discovered since the last meeting. He said, under the original plan, services with Apex would cost an additional \$30 per month to have a web page. Hill said the SSAB also has the option of using the Oak Ridge DOE server free-of-charge. He said the DOE would maintain the page with the SSAB's supervision. Hill said Hawkins would still provide the information for the web page to the DOE. Rhodes asked Hill if he had the addresses of other SSAB web sites. Hill said he would e-mail those addresses to Rhodes. Rhodes said if the DOE service is free and the SSAB will not be censored, he prefers the DOE service. Kay considered this a proposal and there was no objection.

Site Specific Advisory Board Membership

Courtney said she had received two additional applications for membership. One of the applications would apply toward the McCracken County Public Official slot. The applications were held for consideration until next month to give others the chance to respond to the membership advertisements.

Kay said he would not be available at the May 1999 meeting and asked the board if it preferred to reschedule the meeting or have someone else facilitate. The board voted to reschedule the May meeting to the second Thursday of the month, May 13, 1999.

Tentative agenda for the February 18, 1999, meeting:

- Public Comments from Guests
- Minutes
- Information (Handouts)
- EM&EF Project Updates
- Vortec Update
- Depleted UF₆ Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Update
- SSAB Evaluations — Judith Bradbury
- Northeast and Northwest Plume Pump and Treat Facilities — Bill Tanner
- Groundwater Operable Unit Feasibility Study
- Cumulative Effects on the Site
- DOE Response to SSAB Recommendations — Jimmie Hodges
- Administrative Plans for the Board
 - Review of the SSAB Draft Workplan
 - Financial Update
 - Web Page Update
 - SSAB Membership

Action Items

- John Volpe to provide the data from the AIP vegetable study to Mark Donham and Tuss Taylor to provide the AIP annual report to SSAB members.
- Jimmie Hodges to provide Mark Donham a copy of the report on the Vortec test at Fernald.
- Nola Courtney to be placed on the distribution list for regulator comments on WAG 22 documents.
- Dennis Hill to e-mail Craig Rhodes the addresses of other SSAB web sites.